

## 3.8 The Peloponnesian War



# The Peloponnesian War



# The Peloponnesian War

- Corinth, was a rich trading city like Athens, but it belonged to Sparta's Peloponnesian League
- Athens was keeping Corinth's merchants away from the profitable trade on the Aegean Sea
- In response Megara (Pelo League) excluded Athens from their ports





# The Peloponnesian War

- When Athens started to interfere in Corinth, Sparta accused Athens of breaking the 30 Year Treaty
- This was the beginning of the longest and most bitter war the Greeks would ever fight

# The Peloponnesian War

- Pericles knew that Attica could be invaded early by a very strong Spartan army
- He arranged for food to be brought into Athens (guarded by a wall around it) and for people to take refuge behind the walls of the city



# The Peloponnesian War

- The Athenian navy was strong and could raid the coast of the Peloponnese at will
- Athens also had a big surplus in their treasury
- Victory for Athens looked good



# The Peloponnesian War

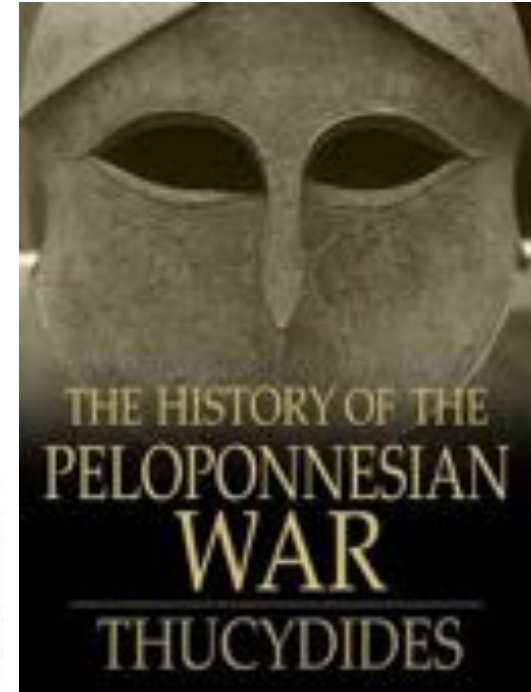
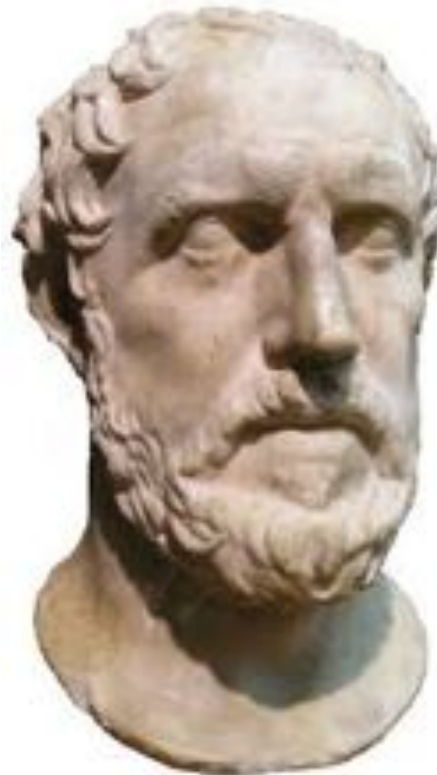
- But.....
- What Pericles could not predict was the plague that hit Athens in 430 BCE  
(2<sup>nd</sup> year of the war)
- Sparta invaded in 430 and the behind the city walls in the cramped, unsanitary conditions disease struck





# The Peloponnesian War

- Thucydides, who wrote the history of this war, caught it himself but survived
- Thucydides left a detailed description of its terrible symptoms



# The Peloponnesian War

- “In two years, perhaps a third of the Athenians died, including their great leader Pericles. Without Pericles this put the two opponents on equal ground”



# The Peloponnesian War

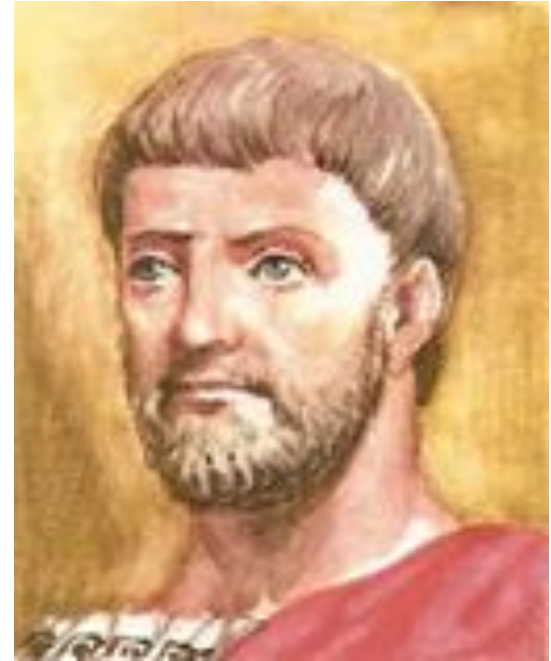
- The conflict lasted for 27 years
- First one side gained a strategic victory, then the other
- After 300 Spartiates were captured alive Sparta wanted peace. Then Sparta successfully attacked Athens allies in the North Aegean, and Athens wanted peace

# The Peloponnesian War

- In 421 BCE King Brasidas (Sparta) and Cleon (leader of radical democrats in Athens) were killed in battle
- This led to a very brief time of peace

# The Peloponnesian War

- Athens then found a new leader, **Alcibiades**, who pushed for further hostilities
- He was the nephew of Pericles





# The Peloponnesian War

- In 418 BCE Athens put together an Alliance to fight Sparta on land.
- The attack was not very successful



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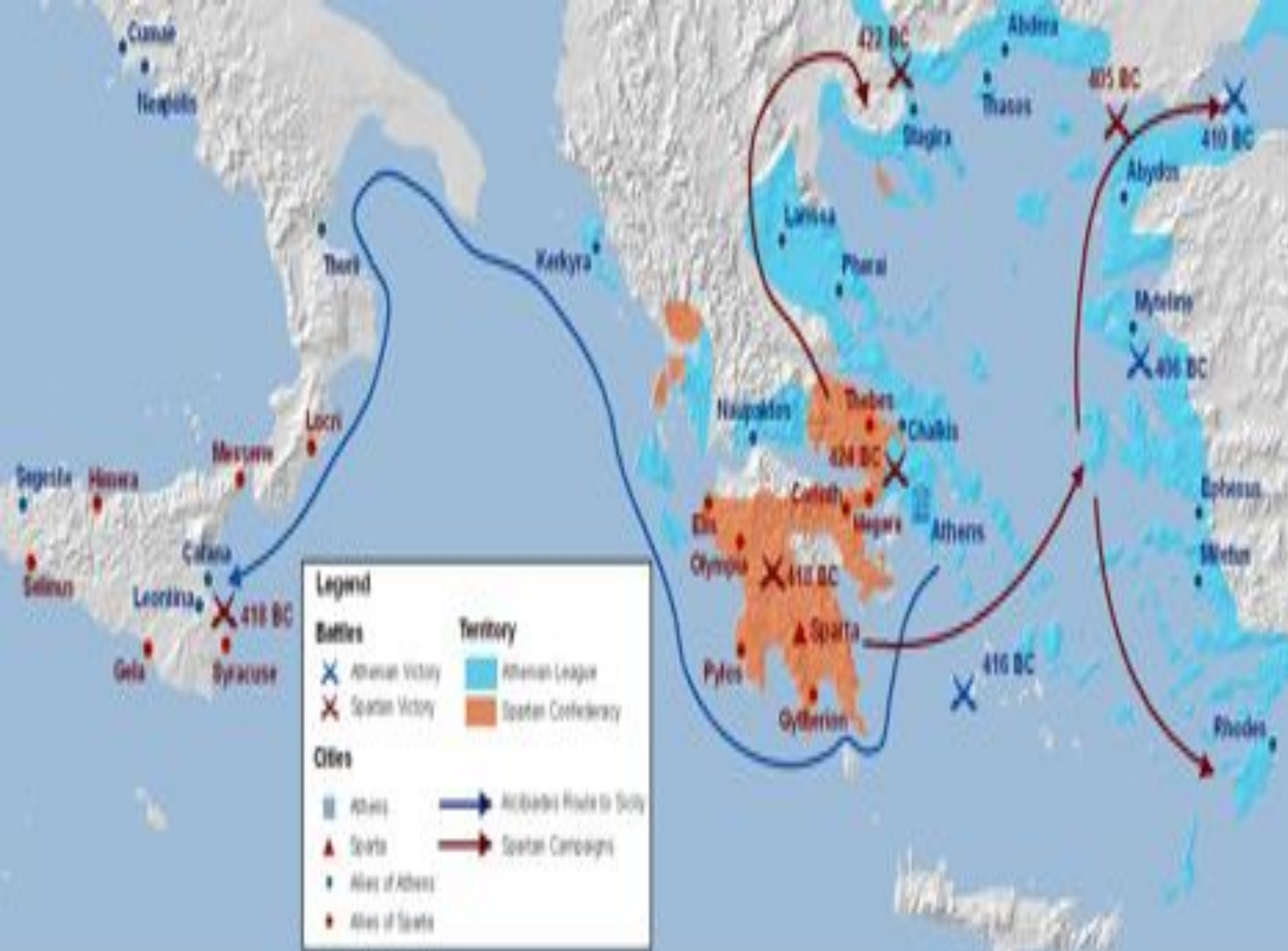
- In 416 BCE Athens attacked the island of Melos, which was a neutral city-state during the war
- The Athenians enslaved the people of Melos and brought the island into the Athenian Empire



# The Peloponnesian War

- Sparta was on the verge of attacking Athens again
- At this critical point, Athens foolishly decided to conquer, Syracuse, the most powerful city on the distant island of Sicily





# The Peloponnesian War

- This two year campaign took a large quantity of ships, manpower, and money.
- It was a total disaster for the Athenians
- Alcibiades strongly support the expedition, but he was charge with a crime at a party (blasphemy)



# The Peloponnesian War

- He was then forced to defect to Sparta
- He helped the Spartans against Athens in a few battles
- He then made enemies in Sparta so he had to defect to Persia

# The Peloponnesian War

- He was then brought back to Athens and was able to turn the war around for a short time
- By 408 BCE the Persians had begun supporting the Athenians
- They provided ships to fight the Spartans

# The Peloponnesian War

- Because of the amount of money they spent on the war with Syracuse, the Athenians' money was dwindling
- They were not able to pay for new ships, so their losses at sea stated.
- The final battle occurred in 405 BCE at Aegospotami, in the Hellespont area.



# The Peloponnesian War

- Athens put one last fleet of ships on the water
- After days without battle the Athenians beached their ships to collect food as they had done on previous days
- The Peloponnese caught them off guard, burned or captured the Athenian ships and rounded up the sailors



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- Sparta's allies, Thebes and Corinth, wanted Sparta to do exactly to the Athenians as they had done in Melos (enslave women and children, kill all the men)
- In the end Sparta spared Athens
- As punishment Athens was required to tear down its long walls

# The Peloponnesian War

- As punishment Athens was required to
  - tear down its long walls
  - Surrender all but 12 ships of its fleet
  - Take back its political exiles
  - Acknowledge Spartan leadership in matters of peace and war
- This was essentially the end of Athens Tyrants